

OLD MOSES; OR, THE PRAYING NEGRO.



MR. B—— was a great merchant in Baltimore. One morning, as he was passing over the vessels that lay at the wharf, he stepped upon the deck of one, at the stern of which he saw a negro sitting, whose dejected countenance gave sure indication of distress. He accosted him with—

"Hey! my man, what is the matter?"

The negro lifted up his eyes, and, looking at Mr. B—, replied:

"Ah! massa, I se in great trouble."

"What about?"

"Kase I'se fotched up here to be sold."

"What for? what have you been doing? have you been stealing? or did you run away? or what?"

"No, no, massa, none o' dat; it's bekase I do n't mind de audes."

"What kind of orders?"

"Well, Massa Stranger, I will tell you. Massa Willum werry strick man, and werry nice man, too, and ebry body on de place got to mine him; and I break trew de rule, but I did n't 'tend to break de rule doe; I forgot myself, an' I got too high."

"It is for getting drunk, then, is it?"

"O! no, sah, not dat nother."

"Then tell me what you are to be sold for?"

"For prayin', sah."

"For praying! that is a strange tale. Will not your master permit you to pray?"

"O, yes, sah; he let me pray easy, but I hollers too loud."

"And why do you halloo in your prayers?"

"Kase de Spirit comes on me, an' I gets happy fore I knows it; den I gone; kant trole myself den; I knows nutting 'bout massa's rule."

"And do you suppose your master will really sell you for that?"

"O, yes; no help for me now; all the men in de world couldn't help me now; kase wen Massa Willum say one t'ing he no do anoder."

"What is your name?"

"Moses, sah."

"What is your master's name?"

"Massa name Colonel Willum C——."

"Where does he live?"

"Down on de easin shoah."

"Is he a good master, and treats you well?"

"O, yes; no better massa in de world."

"Stand up and let me look at you." And Moses stood up, and presented a robust frame; and as Mr. B—— stripped up his sleeve, his arm gave evidence of unusual muscular strength.

"Where is your master?"

"Yander he is, jis comin' to de warf."

As Mr. B—— started for the shore he heard Moses give a heavy sigh, followed by a deep groan. Moses was not at all pleased with the present phase of affairs. He was strongly impressed with the idea that Mr. B—— was a trader, and intended to buy him; and it was this that made him so unwilling to communicate to Mr. B—— the desired information. Mr. B—— reached the wharf just as Colonel C—— did. He introduced himself, and said:

"I understand you want to sell that negro man yonder on board the schooner."

Colonel C—— replied that he did.

"What do you ask for him?"

"I expect to get seven hundred dollars."

"How old do you reckon him to be?"

"Somewhere about thirty."

"Is he healthy?"

"Very; he never had any sickness in his life, except one or two spells of the ague."

"Is he hearty?"

"Yes, sir; he will eat as much as any man ought, and it will do him as much good."

"Is he a good hand?"

"Yes sir; he is the best hand on my place. He is

steady, honest, and industrious. He has been my foreman for the last ten years, and a more trusty negro I never knew."

"Why do you wish to sell him?"

"Because he disobeyed my orders. As I said, he is my foreman; and that he might be available at any moment I might want him, I built his hut within a hundred yards of my own house; and I have never rung the bell at any time in the night or morning that his horn did not answer in five minutes after. But, two years ago, he got religion, and commenced what he terms family prayer; that is, prayer in his hut every night and morning; and when he began his prayer, it was impossible to tell when he would stop, especially if (as he termed it) he got happy. Then he would sing and pray and halloo for an hour or two together, that you might hear him nearly a mile off. And he would pray for me and my wife and my children, and our whole family connection, to the third generation; and, sometimes, when we would have visitors, Moses' prayers would interrupt the conversation, and destroy the enjoyment of the whole company. The women would cry, and the children would cry, and it would get me almost frantic; and even after I had retired, it would sometimes be near daylight before I could go to sleep, for it appeared to me that I could hear Moses pray for three hours after he had finished. I bore it as long as I could, and then forbade his praying any more, and Moses promised obedience, but he soon transgressed; and my rule is never to whip, but whenever a negro proves incorrigible, I sell him. This keeps them in better subjection, and is less trouble than whipping. And I pardoned Moses twice for disobedience in praying so loud, but the third time I knew I must sell him, or every negro on the farm would soon be perfectly regardless of all my orders."

"You spoke of Moses' hut; I suppose from that he has a family."

"Yes, he has a woman and three children, or *wife* I suppose he calls her now ; for soon after he got religion he asked me if they might be married, and I presume they were."

"What will you take for her and the children?"

"If you want them for your own use, I will take seven hundred dollars ; but I shall not sell Moses nor them to go out of the State."

"I wish them all for my own use, and will give you the fourteen hundred dollars."

Mr. B—— and Colonel C—— then went to B——'s store, drew up the writings, and closed the sale, after which they returned to the vessel. Mr. B—— approached the negro, who sat with his eyes fixed upon the deck, wrapped in meditation of the most awful forebodings, and said, "Well, Moses, I have bought you."

Moses made a very low bow, and every muscle of his face worked with emotion as he replied, "Is you massa ? Where's I gwine, massa ? is I gwine to Georgy ?"

"No," said Mr. B—— ; "I'm a merchant here in the city ; yonder is my store, and I want you to attend on the store ; and I have purchased your wife and children, too, that you may not be separated."

"Bress God for dat ! and, massa, kin I go to meetin' sometimes ?"

"Yes, Moses, you can go to church three times on the Sabbath and every night in the week, and you can pray as often as you choose, and as loud as you choose, and as long as you choose ; and every time you pray, whet'er it be at home or in the church, I want you to pray for me, my wife, and all my children ; for, if you are a good man, your prayers will do us no harm, and we need them very much ; and, if you wish to, you may pray for every body of my name in the State. It will not injure them."

While Mr. B—— was dealing out these privileges to

Moses, the negro's eyes danced in their sockets, and his full heart laughed outright for gladness, exposing two rows of as even, clean ivories as any African can boast ; and his heart's response was, " Bress God, bress God all de time, and bress you, too, massa ; Moses neber tinks 'bout he gwine to have all dese commodationers ; dis make me tink 'bout Joseph in de Egypt." And after Moses had poured a few blessings upon Colonel C——, bade him a warm adieu, and requesting him to give his love and farewell to his mistress, the children, and all the servants, he followed Mr B—— to the store, to enter upon the functions of his new office.

The return of the schooner brought to Moses his wife and children.

Early the next spring, as Mr. B—— was one day standing at the store door, he saw a man leap upon the wharf from the deck of a vessel, and walk hurriedly toward the store. He soon recognized him as Colonel C——. They exchanged salutations ; and, to the Colonel's inquiry after Moses, Mr. B—— replied that he was up stairs measuring grain, and invited him to walk up and see him. Soon Mr. B——'s attention was arrested by a very confused noise above. He listened, and heard an unusual shuffling of feet, some one sobbing violently, and some one talking very hurriedly ; and he determined to go up and see what was going on. When he reached the head of the stairs, he was startled by seeing Moses in the middle of the floor, down upon one knee, with his arms around the Colonel's waist, and talking rapidly, while the Colonel stood weeping. So soon as the Colonel could sufficiently control his feelings, he told Mr. B—— that he had never been able to free himself from the influence of Moses' prayers ; and that, during the past year, he and his wife and all his children had been converted to God.

Moses responded : " Bress God, massa C—— ; doe I way up heah, I neber forgit you in my prayers ; I ollers put de

ole massa side de new one. Bress God, dis make Moses tink 'bout Joseph in de Egypt again."

The Colonel then stated to Mr. B—— that his object in coming to Baltimore was to buy Moses and his family back again. But Mr. B—— assured him that was out of the question, for he could not part with him; and he intended to manumit Moses and his wife at forty, and his children at thirty-five years of age.

Moses was not far wrong in his reference to Joseph; for, when Joseph was sold into Egypt, God overruled it to his good, and he obtained blessings that were far beyond his expectations; so with Moses. Joseph eventually proved the instrument in God's hands of saving the lives of those who sold him. Moses proved the instrument in God's hands of saving the man's soul who sold him.

Old Moses is still living. He long since obtained his freedom; and at present occupies a comfortable house of his own, and is doing well for both worlds.

"DOES THE LORD JESUS LOVE COLORED PEOPLE?"

WHEN Uncle Fountain, an aged colored man, was urged by a minister to come to Jesus, he replied with much feeling:

"Master, I do n't believe the Lord Jesus loves black people."

"Why, Uncle Fountain! the Lord Jesus certainly does love black people. He loves every body."

"I do n't believe it; 'cause you say Christians have the spirit of Christ."

"Yes, Uncle Fountain, they have."

"Well, Christians do n't love black people; so, if Christians have the spirit of Christ, Christ do n't love black people. You see, master, I have worked for my old mas-

ter forty years. Master J—— went to school, and I staid at home to find him money and clothes, so Master J—— could preach the gospel. So he preached, 'Love all men as you love yourself.' Then Master W—— learned to preach, 'Love all men as you love yourself;' and, afterward, Master A—— learned to preach the same gospel; and all the time I stayed at home and worked—worked for them and old master. Master J—— rides round in the carriage to preach the gospel. At night he sleeps on a good bed, and I sleep on the floor, under the stairs. He wears good clothes; and, when they are worn out, he gives them to me. He sits at the table with his wife and children; and, when they are done, I sit down and eat at the sink. And then, when Christians want money, they sell my wife and children to get it. So I know if these Christians have the spirit of Christ, Christ don't love the colored people."

"True, Uncle Fountain, yours is a sad case. These people are sadly blinded. They have been brought up to think slavery right, and really do 'nt know any better."

"Ah!" said he, "*that's the strange on't*, that they don't know any better. Suppose *I* should ride in the carriage, and make Master J—— work for nothing! *Then* would n't he know better? Would they think *that* was according to the rule, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'"

The minister replied: "My brother, God knows I pity you, but I can not help you; yet the blessed Jesus can, and he has promised to hear prayer. Let us kneel down here and pray."

A few days after, Uncle Fountain called at the minister's room. He had found peace in the Lord Jesus; and had realized, in the enjoyment of his love, that the Savior "hath respect unto the lowly."